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Parental divorce and adolescent excessive drinking

Tomcikova, Zuzana

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Data sources

This chapter provides a general overview of the study samples (2.1), measures (2.2) and statistical analysis (2.3) used in this thesis.

2.1. Study samples and procedures

Two study samples were used in this thesis.

The first study sample consisted of 3,725 elementary school students in the 8th and 9th grades from three cities – Bratislava (600,000 inhabitants; Western Slovakia), Zilina (156,000 inhabitants; Northern Slovakia) and Kosice (240,000 inhabitants; Eastern Slovakia) – and several smaller towns (10,000 to 40,000 inhabitants) in the Kosice region. The sample was made up of 49% males, with a mean age of 14.3 years (SD 0.65; range 11-17 years). Respondents younger than 13 and older than 16 years old were excluded in all chapters in which this sample was used in order to make the sample more homogeneous and to avoid age extremes which could have an impact on the findings. After this exclusion, the final study sample consisted of 3,694 adolescents (mean age 14.3 years, SD 0.62), with 24.6% coming from Bratislava, 21.3% from Zilina, 32.1% from Kosice and 22.0% from other towns in the Kosice region. The local Ethics Committee approved the study.

The schools and classes were selected randomly in each region. School directors were asked for participation. After their approval and the approval of parents, data were collected by a team of trained researchers and research assistants in October, November and December 2006. Respondents filled in a questionnaire on a voluntary and anonymous basis without the presence of the teacher during two regular 45-minute lessons. The overall response rate was 93.0%. Non-response was primarily due to illness or another type of absence. This sample was used in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 7.

A second study sample was obtained from the Slovak part of the 2005/06 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study, a multinational study conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (Currie et al., 2008). The total Slovak sample consisted of 3,882 students (46.3% males) aged 10 to 16 (mean age 13.3; SD 1.60). Respondents were divided into three age categories – 11, 13 and 15-year olds.

The data were collected in a way similar to the previously described sample. Trained researchers and research assistants collected the data

during one regular 45-minute lesson. Respondents completed the questionnaire on a voluntary and anonymous basis without the presence of the teacher in their classroom, according to the methodology of the HBSC-study. This sample was used in Chapter 6.

2.2. Measures

This section provides an overview of the variables and measures used in this thesis. Brief information about the origin of the measures and short descriptions of each of them are presented in Table 2.1.

The central dependent variables were indicators of excessive drinking – drunkenness in the last four weeks (Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 7) and lifetime drunkenness (Chapter 6). The following questions were used to assess these indicators: (1) ‘In the last 4 weeks have you been drunk?’ with the possible answers ‘no / 1–2 times / 3 and more times’; and (2) ‘Have you ever had so much alcohol that you were really drunk?’ with the possible answers ‘no, never / yes, once / yes, 2–3 times / yes, 4–10 times / yes, more than 10 times’.

The frequency of alcohol drinking in the last four weeks was used as an additional dependent variable in Chapters 1 and 6. The following questions were used to assess the frequency of alcohol drinking: (1) ‘How many times in the last 4 weeks have you drunk alcohol?’ with the possible answers ‘not even once / 1–2 times / 3 and more times’; and (2) ‘How often have you drunk any of these types of alcohol (beer, wine, spirits, alcopops, and other) in the past month?’ with the possible answers ‘never / rarely / every month / every week / every day’.

The independent variables used in this thesis concerned indicators of socioeconomic status (*Family affluence scale EAS, Parents’ education level*), indicators of family structure (*Parental divorce, Composition of the household*), indicators of family functioning (*Perceived Social Support Scale, PSSS; Perception of Parents Scale, POP; Communication with parents; Adolescent Family Process Measure, AFPM*), other interpersonal factors (*Leisure time activities with peers*) and intrapersonal factors (*Ten-Item Personality Inventory, TIPI; Rosenberg self-esteem scale, RSE; Aggression Questionnaire, AQ; 12-item General Health Questionnaire, GHQ-12*).

2.3. Statistical analysis

Several statistical methods were used to analyse the data. They were performed using the statistical software package SPSS, versions 14.0 and 16.0; and MLwiN 2.02. More detailed information about the statistical analyses performed can be found in the “statistical analysis” section of each chapter. Standard descriptive analyses regarding the studied variables

were performed in Chapters 3 – 7. Chi-square tests, F-tests or t-tests were used in Chapters 3, 5 and 7 to explore differences in the studied variables. Logistic regression was performed in Chapters 3 – 7.

Table 2.1 Brief summary of variables and measures used in this thesis

Measure	Source	Type of variable (Chapters)	Description
Drunkenness in the last four weeks	derived from Currie et al., 2004	Dependent (3,4,5,7)	Indicator of excessive drinking
Lifetime drunkenness	Currie et al., 2004	Dependent (6)	Indicator of excessive drinking
Frequent alcohol drinking	derived from Currie et al., 2004	Dependent (3, 6)	Indicator of excessive drinking
FAS	Currie et al., 2004	Independent (3,4)	Indicator of socioeconomic status
Parents' education	Currie et al., 2004	Independent (3,4)	Indicator of socioeconomic status
Parental divorce	derived from Currie et al., 2004	Independent (3,4,7)	Indicator of family structure
Composition of the household	derived from Currie et al., 2004	Independent (4)	Indicator of family structure
PSSS	Currie et al., 2004	Independent (6)	Measure of perceived social support from family, friends and significant others
	Blumenthal, 1987	Independent (3,4)	
POP	Phares & Renk, 1998	Independent (7)	Measure of positive and negative affect to parents
Communication with parents	Currie et al., 2004	Independent (6)	Indicator of the quality of parent-adolescent communication
AFPM	Vazsonyi et al., 2003	Independent (5)	Measure of six dimensions of family processes including parental monitoring
Leisure time activities	derived from Currie et al., 2004	Independent (5)	Indicator of leisure activities spent with peers
TIP1	Gostling et al., 2003	Independent (3)	Brief measure of the Big-Five personality domains
RSE	Rosenberg, 1965	Independent (3)	Measure of a person's evaluation of his/her worthiness
AQ	Nakano, 2001	Independent (3)	Measure of four dimension of aggression
GHD-12	Goldberg, 1988	Independent (3, 4)	Measure of two dimensions of psychological well-being

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